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NEWS CONFERENCE # 802

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH PIERRE SALINGER

OCTOBER 27, 1962

12:15 P.M. EDT

SATURDAY

MR. SALINGER: We have one routine matter this morning, and that is the President's announcement of his intention to appoint Donald Dumont as Minister to the Kingdom of Burundi.

I have a White House statement that I will read.

Q. Will we have copies of this?

MR. SALINGER: We will give it to you. I have just gotten it. We will put it out in text form as soon as possible. It is one page.

"Several inconsistent and conflicting proposals have been made by the USSR within the last 24 hours, including the one just made public in Moscow. The proposal broadcast this morning involves the security of nations outside the Western Hemisphere. But it is the Western Hemisphere countries and they alone that are subject to the threat that has produced the current crisis -- the action of the Soviet Government in secretly introducing offensive weapons into Cuba. Work on these offensive weapons is still proceeding at a rapid pace. The first imperative must be to deal with this immediate threat, under which no sensible negotiation can proceed.

"It is, therefore, the position of the United States that as an urgent preliminary to consideration of any proposals work on the Cuban bases must stop; offensive weapons must be rendered inoperable; and further shipment of offensive weapons to Cuba must cease -- all under effective international verification.

"As to proposals concerning the security of nations outside this Hemisphere, the United States and its allies have long taken the lead in seeking properly inspected arms limitation on both sides. These efforts can continue as soon as the present Soviet-created threat is ended."

MR. SALINGER: Let me again make clear what I made clear to some of you earlier today.

At the time when TASS first announced that a message from Mr. Khrushchev was being dispatched to the President, and that they were going to transmit it, I said we had received a message from Mr. Khrushchev last night. I also said at that time that we would compare the text of the statement being transmitted by TASS to see if it jibed with the statement we received last night.

A subsequent check of the two texts disclosed that this was a new message. We have not yet received this message, except through the wire services. However, we are at work preparing an answer both to the message of last night and the message of today. It is unlikely, however, I will have anything further to say on this matter today.

Q. Will you let us know when you get the second letter?

MR. SALINGER: Yes.

Q. Will you make the replies public?

MR. SALINGER: We don't intend to.

Q. This, therefore, is a reply to a proposal which was announced over the Moscow radio?

MR. SALINGER: That is correct.

Q. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Q. There are two messages, then?

MR. SALINGER: That is right.

Q. What did the one last night say?

Q. The second message may have had what TASS announced?

MR. SALINGER: Yes. We haven't received that one.

Q. Can we have a lid for an hour or so?

MR. SALINGER: We will give you a lid until 2 o'clock.

Q. What was the one last night on?

MR. SALINGER: We can't give you that.

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"As to proposals concerning the security of nations outside this Hemisphere, the United States and its allies have long taken the lead in seeking properly inspected arms limitation on both sides. These efforts can continue as soon as the present Soviet-created threat is ended."

Hold it just a minute.

Q. Was this missile base activity through yesterday?

MR. SALINGER: My statement yesterday was the up-to-date report of the Government on that situation.

Q. Has the President communicated this to Khrushchev?

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message from Mr. Khrushchev last night. I also said at that time that we would compare the text of the statement being transmitted by TASS to see if it jibed with the statement we received last night.

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Q. What was the one last night on?

MR. SALINGER: We can't give you that.

Q. It wasn't made public?

MR. SALINGER: No.

Q. Is the thrust of this really anything on the bases --

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MR. SALINGER: That statement is about as explicit as you can possibly be, Ned.

Q. Was there a third message?

MR. SALINGER: No. Two.

Q. The one last night and the one this morning?

MR. SALINGER: Yes. The second one has not been received.

Q. But these are the only two since Tuesday morning?

MR. SALINGER: We are talking about these messages right now.

Q. Will there be any clarification of terms like "international verification"?

MR. SALINGER: I think it is extremely explicit.

Q. Pierre, what is your schedule for us the rest of the day?

MR. SALINGER: We have a lid until 2 o'clock.

Q. Are you planning a regular briefing?

MR. SALINGER: I have no regular briefing planned this afternoon. I will assess the situation when I come back from lunch.

Q. And you will either have a briefing or not have a briefing?

MR. SALINGER: Right.

Q. Will "international verification" be up-to-date photographs?

MR. SALINGER: I will not answer that question. That is a subject which has been the subject of great discussion.

Q. Has the National Security Council been meeting this morning?

MR. SALINGER: They met for two hours this morning.

Q. Was this drafted in that meeting?

MR. SALINGER: Oh, I don't know.

MR. SALINGER: I don't know if they have gone or not.

Q. Are you going to have anything on the meeting with the Governors?

MR. SALINGER: They may have something to say. I don't think we will have anything to say.

Q. This moved over the wires about the time the meeting began with the National Security Council?

MR. SALINGER: What?

Q. Did the President have this before he met with the Security Council?

MR. SALINGER: The first bulletin was at 10 o'clock out of TASS, the meeting started at 10 o'clock, and we sent the information as it came over the various wire services we have. They had the complete message before the National Security Council broke up, from the wire services, not as official.

Q. Pierre, this is about the second or third message that has been delayed for some length. Is there any particular reason for that delay?

Q. Have you had any word, Pierre, about when the second message may be delivered, such as from the embassy here?

MR. SALINGER: I have no word on it at all.

Q. And about the message that you got last night, you won't say anything?

MR. SALINGER: I am not commenting on that one.

Q. Do you think the two replies will go to Moscow this afternoon?

MR. SALINGER: I can't tell you that.

Q. Any more plans with the Congressional leaders?

MR. SALINGER: No, sir.

Q. No changes?

MR. SALINGER: No, sir.

Q. Did you say anything about a briefing later today?

MR. SALINGER: I said I would assess the need for a briefing after I come back from lunch.

MR. SALINGER: No. Two.

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Q. Was this drafted in that meeting?

MR. SALINGER: They worked on it in there; yes.

Q. Was any communication sent to any other government in the preparation of this statement?

MR. SALINGER: No, sir.

Q. Have the Governors gone?

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Q. What about the Governors?

MR. SALINGER: They are out there now talking to everybody.

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Q. You said before they would be working on replies to both of these today?

MR. SALINGER: That is right.

Q. But you thought you would likely not have anything to say about the replies today; is that right?

MR. SALINGER: That is exactly what I said.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END